



# SAFER AT HOME

## LIBRARIES

### **Safeguarding Guidance:**

The Governor's Economic Re-Opening Task Force recommends protocols for safeguarding all New Hampshire businesses and individuals during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. This industry-specific guidance is based on what is currently known about COVID-19 and is intended to protect the public's health and allow New Hampshire to remain open for business.

The intent of these recommendations is to reduce transmission of COVID-19 among employees and customers; support healthy business operations; and maintain a healthy work environment.

In addition to strict adherence to [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#) and [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#) guidance, and [US Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#), the State of New Hampshire recommends policies and procedures to protect consumers and employees, including.

These guidelines apply to libraries who are re-opening their physical locations and resuming in person operations.

### **Employee Protection:**

1. All staff must wear cloth face coverings over their noses and mouths at all times when at work in the library and in public locations or shared staff areas (e.g. break rooms) when social distancing is difficult to maintain.
2. Provide training on cloth face coverings based on CDC guidance for [Use of Cloth Face Coverings](#).
3. People wearing face coverings must not touch their eyes, nose, mouth, or face, or adjust their facemask without first sanitizing hands. After touching face or adjusting mask, hands must be sanitized.
4. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer must be made readily available for both staff and consumers at entrances and exits to libraries, at checkout locations, and in staff breakrooms and other commonly used staff areas.
5. Stagger shifts, breaks, and meals, in compliance with wage and hour laws and regulations to maintain social distancing.
6. Provide regular updates and training for employees about personal COVID-19 mitigation and library safeguards based upon CDC guidelines.
7. Require all employees to report any symptoms of COVID-19 or close contact to a person with COVID-19 to supervisor.
8. Staff must be screened (questioned about) for symptoms of COVID-19 before each shift. Staff with any symptoms must not be allowed to work.
9. Staff should be instructed to maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from others (staff and customers) at all times. Prohibit congregating in break rooms or common areas



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and limit capacity of such areas to allow for a safe social distancing of at least 6 feet whenever possible.

10. Restrict interaction between employees and outside visitors or delivery drivers; implement touchless receiving practices if possible.

### Consumer Protection:

1. Develop a process for limiting the number of customers inside a library at a given time, excluding employees and representatives of third-party delivery companies, to 50 percent or less of building occupancy based on New Hampshire's Building and Fire Code.
2. Ensure any waiting line outside the library has demarcations spacing customers at least 6 feet apart.
3. Customers should be asked to wear cloth face coverings at all times when inside the library. Signage and staff should request this before customers enter the store.
4. Consider dedicated hours for the elderly and medically vulnerable persons.
5. If feasible and reasonable, establish one-way traffic patterns for social distancing within aisles and between book stacks.
6. Where appropriate and possible, implement curbside pickup and/or delivery service options to minimize contact and maintain social distancing.
7. Assign dedicated staff (i.e. a safety officer) to monitor social distancing and compliance with protective actions, and to prompt customers and other staff about the importance of social distancing, hand hygiene, and use of cloth face coverings.
8. Add social distancing reminder signage, personal and floor stickers in key areas in the library (e.g. check-out counters)
9. Offer self-checkout options when possible.

### Business Process Adaptations:

1. Services should preferably be paid for electronically, but libraries may accept cash or check.
2. Establish enhanced cleaning protocols that follow [CDC guidance](#) relating to cleaning and disinfection for COVID-19. This includes cleaning and disinfecting shared resources and frequently touched surfaces every two hours. Check-out counters should be wiped down and cleaned between each customer.
3. When possible, use a clearly designated entrance and a separate clearly designated exit to maintain social distancing.
4. Use plastic shields or barriers between customers and library employees and clean them frequently.
5. Adjust library hours to allow time for enhanced cleaning.
6. Suspend offerings of food and coffee, unless the services follow the [Restaurant and Food Service Guidance](#).
7. Task management-level employees within a library (i.e. a safety officer) to monitor compliance.



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8. Respect the right of libraries to have requirements over and above these recommendations.
9. Consider offering employees whose responsibilities can be met remotely to continue to work from home.
10. Consider waiving fines and extending due dates to discourage customers from coming into the library in-person.
11. Customers are encouraged to utilize book drop off locations instead of returning books in-person.
12. Libraries should quarantine books for 72 hours before being handled by library staff.
13. Ensure social distancing at computer terminals. This may include closing computer stations off to facilitate 6 feet of distancing. It is recommended that disinfectant wipes be provided for computer terminal users.
14. Ensure employee areas are clearly separated from areas that are frequented by patrons.
15. Public areas shall be rearranged to maintain 6 feet of distancing between seats.
16. Minimize shared touch surfaces such as tables, pens, library cards, receipts, etc.
17. Consider offering library services and programs remotely to the greatest extent feasible.

